

Message Text

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17

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 /062 W

----- 032618

R 050700Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4649

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LT

SUBJECT: KING ATTEMPTS TO ASSERT HIMSELF

1. WHILE WE HEARD RUMOR OVER WEEKEND THAT KING MOSHOESHOE UNDER HOUSE ARREST, RELIABLE AND KNOWLEDGABLE SOURCE HAS ASSURED US THIS DEFINITELY NOT THE CASE ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME RENEWED TENSION BETWEEN KING AND PRIME MINISTER JONATHAN WHICH MAY HAVE PROMPTED RUMOR.

2. JONATHAN HAS SCHEDULED POLITICAL RALLIES AROUND COUNTRY FROM MID-FEBRUARY INTO MARCH, APPARENTLY TO EXERCISE AS MUCH INFLUENCE AS POSSIBLE BEFORE EVENTUAL NATIONAL COMMISSION GETS UNDER WAY. HE APPARENTLY BELIEVES HIS POSITION WILL BE ENHANCED IF KING APPEARS WITH HIM.

3. KING REPORTEDLY INITIALLY AGREED TO GO ALONG BUT BACKED OUT BECAUSE HE WOULD APPEAR TO BE SUPPORTING JONATHAN'S BASUTO-LAND NATIONAL PARTY. HE HAS ALSO APPARENTLY BEEN ENCOURAGED (BY SUCH OUTSIDERS AS PRESIDENTS KAUNDA AND NYERERE AND, AT CONFIDENTIAL

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HOME, BY MEMBERS OF ROYAL FAMILY AND OPPOSITION POLITICIANS)

TO TAKE A STAND MORE INDEPENDENT OF JONATHAN IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT WIN SOME CONCESSIONS FROM HIM.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS, KING REPORTEDLY AGAIN AGREED TO ACCOMPANY JONATHAN IF LATTER WOULD ESTABLISH NATIONAL (I.E., COALITION) CABINET, EXPELLING DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MASERIBANE AND INTERIOR MINISTER IN PARTICULAR AND INCLUDING OPPOSITION FIGURES LEANYA (MFP), MOFELI (UDP), SELLO (BCP), AND RAMOREBOLI (BCP). JONATHAN LISTENED BUT HAS NOT ACTED ON KING'S PROPOSAL. NEVERTHELESS HE PERSUADED KING TO RECONSIDER AND JOIN HIM ON COUNTRYSIDE TOUR. WHAT, IF ANY, CONCESSIONS KING MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN FROM JONATHAN NOT KNOWN TO US.

5. COMMENT: THIS MANEUVERING CONFIRMS THAT KING STILL HAS POLITICAL HOPES, HENCE HIS WARINESS OF BECOMING FURTHER ASSOCIATED WITH JONATHAN AND BASUTOLAND NATIONAL PARTY. IT ALSO SHOWS HE REGAINING WILLINGNESS TO STAND UP TO PRIME MINISTER ALTHOUGH JONATHAN PROBABLY TOO WILY TO LET KING INFLUENCE HIM GREATLY AT THIS STAGE. FACT OF JONATHAN'S WANING POPULARITY ESTABLISHED, HOWEVER, AND IT ALREADY EVIDENT HE CONSIDERS KING'S SUPPORT DESIRABLE. EVENTUALLY HE MAY FIND IT NECESSARY. FINALLY, MANEUVERING OF INTEREST BECAUSE IT POINTS OUT BELIEF OF OTHERS, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE LESOTHO, THAT KING CAN AND SHOULD HAVE INFLUENCE OVER JONATHAN'S GOVERNMENT.

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